

114TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. _____

To recognize the importance of the land forces of the United States Armed Forces and to revise the fiscal year 2016 end-strength levels for these Land Forces and specify new permanent active duty end strength minimum levels, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. GIBSON introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To recognize the importance of the land forces of the United States Armed Forces and to revise the fiscal year 2016 end-strength levels for these Land Forces and specify new permanent active duty end strength minimum levels, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Protecting Our Secu-
5 rity Through Utilizing Right-Sized End-Strength Act of
6 2016” or the “POSTURE Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) The first function of Government is to se-
4 cure its people and their rights. The United States
5 is blessed that countless men and women have done
6 so by serving in the Armed Forces, which consists
7 of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and
8 Coast Guard.

9 (2) History has shown that sufficient Land
10 Forces are critical to the security of the American
11 people and their rights and to assure United States
12 allies, deter aggression, shape security environments,
13 and win wars. Furthermore, Land Forces have been
14 proven to be essential to consolidate gains and
15 achieve sustainable outcomes.

16 (3) The Land Forces of the United States are
17 comprised of the Army (Active Army, Army Reserve,
18 and Army National Guard) and the Marine Corps
19 (Active Marine Corps and Marine Corps Reserve).

20 (4) On the day before September 11, 2001, the
21 Land Forces of the United States included
22 1,036,601 Soldiers and 212,744 Marines. Broken
23 down by component, that included 480,801 Soldiers
24 in the Active Army, 205,300 Soldiers in the Army
25 Reserve, 350,500 Soldiers in the Army National

1 Guard, 172,934 Marines in the Active Marine Corps,
2 and 39,810 Marines in the Marine Corps Reserve.

3 (5) At the height of the Global War on Ter-
4 rorism, the Land Forces of the United States in-
5 cluded 1,138,907 Soldiers and 242,558 Marines.
6 Broken down by component, that included 570,000
7 Soldiers in the Active Army, 206,892 Soldiers in the
8 Army Reserve, 362,015 Soldiers in the Army Na-
9 tional Guard, 202,786 Marines in the Active Marine
10 Corps, and 39,772 Marines in the Marine Corps Re-
11 serve.

12 (6) For fiscal year 2016, authorizations for the
13 Land Forces of the United States include 1,015,000
14 Soldiers and 222,900 Marines. Broken down by
15 component, that includes 475,000 Soldiers in the
16 Active Army, 198,000 Soldiers in the Army Reserve,
17 342,000 Soldiers in the Army National Guard,
18 184,000 Marines in the Active Marine Corps, and
19 38,900 Marines in the Marine Corps Reserve.

20 (7) The drawdown of the Land Forces of the
21 United States is planned to continue through fiscal
22 year 2018, when end strength will be approximately
23 970,000 Soldiers and 220,500 Marines. Broken
24 down by component, that will be 450,000 Soldiers in
25 the Active Army, approximately 195,000 Soldiers in

1 the Army Reserve, approximately 335,000 Soldiers
2 in the Army National Guard, 182,000 Marines in
3 Active Marine Corps, and 38,500 Marines in the
4 Marine Corps Reserve.

5 (8) In Europe, forward-stationed Army forces
6 have been reduced from over 215,000 at the time of
7 the fall of the Berlin Wall to the current level of
8 under 30,000, jeopardizing the United States stra-
9 tegic capability to deter adversaries by conventional
10 force and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's
11 capability to rapidly respond to Russian aggression
12 against its front-line member states.

13 (9) The Administration has enacted this policy
14 of reducing the end strength of United States Land
15 Forces based on security analysis and expectations
16 of future force capabilities contained in the 2012
17 Defense Strategic Guidance, the 2013 Strategic
18 Choices and Management Review (SCMR), and the
19 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), which in-
20 cluded the following:

21 (A) Ending the wars in Iraq and Afghani-
22 stan by “transition[ing] out of Iraq and
23 draw[ing] down in Afghanistan”.

24 (B) “Build[ing] a closer relationship”
25 with Russia and assuming that “most Euro-

1 pean countries are now producers of security
2 rather than consumers of it”.

3 (C) No longer sizing United States Armed
4 Forces “to conduct large-scale, prolonged sta-
5 bility operations”.

6 (D) “Increas[ing] reliance on our allies
7 and partners” to compensate for “reductions in
8 our capacity”.

9 (E) Emphasizing an ability to regenerate
10 capabilities and the use of innovation and tech-
11 nology to compensate for a smaller force.

12 (10) Given developments over the past several
13 years, the assumptions about the security environ-
14 ment are outdated and, unfortunately, proven
15 flawed.

16 (11) The United States, its allies, and their
17 partners face new threats, including the following:

18 (A) A civil war in Syria, triggering a hu-
19 manitarian crisis and destabilizing the entire
20 region.

21 (B) The rise of the Islamic State which
22 has taken control of large swaths of territory in
23 Syria and Iraq and has more ambitious global
24 goals, including stated intentions of additional

1 direct attacks against the United States and
2 United States allies, both at home and abroad.

3 (C) Iran, which has continued its bellicose
4 rhetoric and support for terrorist activities
5 throughout the Middle East;

6 (D) A resurgent Russia that annexed Cri-
7 mea, invaded Ukraine, and is now conducting
8 military operations in Syria, with its posture
9 and actions causing concern to NATO allies;

10 (E) The continued military build-up by
11 China and its actions in the South China Sea,
12 which have raised concerns among nations in
13 the Pacific and across the world.

14 (F) A provocative and unpredictable North
15 Korea that has escalated tensions throughout
16 the Pacific and beyond and expanded its nu-
17 clear capability.

18 (12) In response to these developments, short
19 notice deployments of United States Land Forces
20 have increased across the globe, including the fol-
21 lowing:

22 (A) To address a resurgent Russia, the
23 Army deployed forces in various locations in
24 Eastern Europe to assure NATO allies and to
25 help train, assist, and assure their armed forces

1 as well as sent forces to Ukraine to train and
2 equip their armed forces.

3 (B) To address the rise of the Islamic
4 State, the Army deployed forces to Iraq to train
5 and assist their armed forces.

6 (C) To address a resurgent Taliban in Af-
7 ghanistan, scheduled redeployments of United
8 States Land Forces were altered and these
9 forces are now expected to remain in Afghani-
10 stan for the foreseeable future.

11 (D) To help stabilize troubled areas across
12 the globe, including Southeast Asia and Africa,
13 the Marine Corps and Army have deployed to
14 conflict-scarred countries such as Cambodia.

15 (E) To address unique threats and to build
16 partner capacity across the globe, United States
17 Joint Special Operations Forces continue to
18 constantly deploy worldwide.

19 (F) To address widespread and desta-
20 bilizing natural disasters, including the Indian
21 Ocean earthquake and tsunami in 2004, the
22 earthquake in Haiti in 2010, the tsunami in
23 Japan in 2011, the Ebola outbreak in West Af-
24 rica in 2014, and the earthquake in Nepal in

1 2015, the Army and Marine Corps continue to
2 deploy on short notice across the globe.

3 (13) Furthermore, the assumptions about the
4 future purpose, use, and capability of the Land
5 Forces have also been disputed:

6 (A) The 2014 National Defense Panel con-
7 cluded that the 2014 QDR's "reduction in
8 Army end strength goes too far."

9 (B) The National Commission on the Fu-
10 ture of the Army found the following:

11 (i) "Because PB16 (FY2016 Presi-
12 dent's Budget) does not address the esca-
13 lation of threats to global stability and na-
14 tional security, it is, at best, on the low
15 end of needed resources" (Page 43).

16 (ii) ". . .this force size provides only
17 limited ability to react to unforeseen cir-
18 cumstances" (Page 51).

19 (iii) "Using directed planning assump-
20 tions and with its planned fiscal year 2017
21 force, the Army is, in fact, neither sized
22 nor shaped for conducting any kind of
23 large-scale, long-duration mission at ac-
24 ceptable risk" (Page 52).

1 (14) A comprehensive and holistic view of the
2 Land Forces of the United States is necessary. In
3 particular, previous assumptions about the deploy-
4 ment and use of reserve components no longer apply.
5 For example, more than 600,000 members of the re-
6 serve components have been deployed since Sep-
7 tember 11, 2001. Beyond these missions conducted
8 pursuant to the authority of title 10 of the United
9 States Code, these forces are also responsible for all
10 homeland defense and critical defense support to
11 civil authority missions under title 32 of the United
12 States Code during times of crisis response and nat-
13 ural disaster relief. For these reasons, the reserve
14 components of the Land Forces are a critical piece
15 to the overall mission of the total force.

16 (15) Finally, senior leaders in the United States
17 military have expressed concern regarding the cur-
18 rent and future reductions in the end strength of the
19 Land Forces of the United States, including the fol-
20 lowing:

21 (A) Then-Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of
22 Staff, General Martin Dempsey, wrote in his
23 risk assessment accompanying the 2014 QDR
24 that the current defense strategy “takes risk in
25 the capacity of. . .land forces”.

1 (B) The current Chief of Staff of the
2 Army, General Mark Milley disputed many of
3 the assumptions described in finding 8 in an
4 address before the Association of the United
5 States Army, including that “wars of the future
6 will be short”, “wars can be won through the
7 use of advanced technologies”, “allies and part-
8 ners can provide capable land forces in suffi-
9 cient scale”, and “armies are easy to regen-
10 erate”.

11 (C) The current commander of United
12 States European Command, General Philip
13 Breedlove, testified before the House Appro-
14 priations Committee’s Subcommittee on De-
15 fense that “virtual presence means actual ab-
16 sence... Further reductions of both infrastruc-
17 ture and forces will reduce our access to key
18 strategic locations during times of crisis”.

19 (D) The former Commandant of the Ma-
20 rine Corps, General James Amos, testified at a
21 hearing before the Senate Armed Services Com-
22 mittee that “we are headed towards a force in
23 not too many years that will be hollow back
24 home and not ready to deploy. . .there would

1 be no rotational relief like we had in Iraq and
2 Afghanistan”.

3 (E) The former commander of United
4 States European Command, Admiral James
5 Stavridis, recently stated that “we’re still at
6 war... actively involved on multiple continents in
7 real combat operations. We should not be dras-
8 tically reducing our troop levels.”.

9 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

10 Given the volatile, uncertain, and ambiguous world
11 and the need for trained and ready Land Forces of the
12 United States, in conjunction with joint and multinational
13 forces, to deter threats, shape the international security
14 environment, respond to emergent situations and crises,
15 and, if necessary, to fight and win the Nation’s wars, it
16 is the sense of Congress that the planned drawdown of
17 Land Forces should be immediately stopped.

18 **SEC. 4. FISCAL YEAR 2016 END-STRENGTH LEVELS FOR**

19 **LAND FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES.**

20 (a) ACTIVE FORCES.—

21 (1) ARMY.—The authorized end strength for
22 Army active duty personnel as of September 30,
23 2016, is 480,000.

1 (2) MARINE CORPS.—The authorized end
2 strength for Marine Corps active duty personnel as
3 of September 30, 2016, is 184,000.

4 (b) SELECTED RESERVE.—

5 (1) ARMY RESERVE COMPONENTS.—The au-
6 thorized end strength for Selected Reserve personnel
7 of the Army reserve components as of September 30,
8 2016, are as follows:

9 (A) The Army National Guard of the
10 United States, 350,000.

11 (B) The Army Reserve, 205,000.

12 (2) MARINE CORPS RESERVE.—The authorized
13 end strength for Selected Reserve personnel of the
14 Marine Corps Reserve as of September 30, 2016, is
15 38,900.

16 **SEC. 5. REVISION IN PERMANENT ACTIVE DUTY END**
17 **STRENGTH MINIMUM LEVELS.**

18 Section 691(b) of title 10, United States Code, is
19 amended by striking paragraphs (1) through (4) and in-
20 serting the following:

21 “(1) For the Army, 480,000.

22 “(2) For the Navy, 329,200.

23 “(3) For the Marine Corps, 184,000.

24 “(4) For the Air Force, 317,000.”.

1 **SEC. 6. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

2 It is policy of the United States to pursue and main-
3 tain peace through strength. Therefore, any proposal to
4 lower the end strength levels established by this Act and
5 the amendments made by this Act must first be approved
6 by Congress through the enactment of a law to that effect.